

IN THE CLAIMS:

In line 1, delete "Claims" and insert:

C L A I M S

What is claimed is:

Please amend claims 1-5 to read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A In a two-piece joining device ~~(1, 1')~~ for sheet pile retaining walls, which ~~consists of~~ comprises two interlocking, strip-shaped joining elements ~~(2, 2', 3, 3')~~ for connecting two adjacent individual sheet piling elements ~~(5, 11)~~ of the sheet pile retaining walls, e.g., a sheet piling, which are to be pile-driven in each case, the first joining element ~~(2, 2')~~ being affixable with a base ~~(4)~~ to the first individual sheet piling element ~~(5)~~ and comprising a neck strip ~~(8)~~ projecting away from the base ~~(4)~~ and the individual sheet piling element ~~(5)~~ and an adjoining button strip ~~(9)~~ and the second joining element ~~(3, 3')~~ being affixable with a base ~~(10)~~ to another individual sheet piling element ~~(11)~~ and comprising two hook strips ~~(14)~~ projecting away from the base ~~(10)~~ and the individual element ~~(11)~~, which define between them a hollow space ~~(15)~~ so that it is held in the hollow space, (15),

~~characterized in that~~ the improvement wherein the base (4) of the first joining element (2, 2') comprises on its two longitudinal sides, at least at some points, holding portions (16, 16') projecting away from the base (4), which embrace the outer sides of the hook strips (14, 14') of the second joining element (3, 3') at least partly and prevent a widening of the hook strips (14, 14') in the case of tensile forces between the two individual sheet piling elements (5, 11).

2. (Currently Amended) A joining device according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the holding portions are holding strips (16, 16').

3. (Currently Amended) A joining device according to claim 1, ~~or 2, characterized in that~~ wherein the holding portions (16, 16') extend along the entire length of the base (4) of the first joining element (2, 2').

4. (Currently Amended) A joining device according to ~~any of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the hook strips (14') of the second joining element (3') are

provided with a button strip (18) each on their ends and
that wherein the holding portions (16') of the first joining
element (2') encompass these button strips (18) at least
partly.

5. (Currently Amended) A joining device according to ~~any of~~
~~the preceding claims, characterized in that that~~ claim 1,
wherein the joining elements (2, 2', 3, 3') are extruded
steel profiles.